

Idaho & Western Montana

In general, the Region's spring 2004 weather was relatively mild. Many locations exceeded records for high temperature and low precipitation in March and April, with a noted lack of major storms. May was much more variable, with most areas reporting average to cool temperatures and above-average rainfall. Although a few pioneering birds set new early arrival records in both states, most migrants showed up on schedule.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (American Falls Res., Bingham and Power, ID); Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, ID); L.M. (Lee Metcalf N.W.R. near Stevensville, MT).

LOONS THROUGH TERNS

Common Loons staged in unusual numbers, with high counts of 84 at Twin Lakes Res., Franklin, ID 17 Apr (CT) and 95 at Ennis L., Madison, MT 23 Apr (JP). Though still under review, a Manx Shearwater at Ninepipe N.W.R., Lake, MT 30 May (†, ph. DH, BM et al.) was an astounding event that will likely represent the first record for the Region and interior West. The species has not been noted in the continent's interior closer than Michigan (19 Aug 2000), and that Michigan record was the *only* previous report from the continent's true interior! As was the case in Michigan, the bird's appearance cannot be easily tied to any discrete weather event.

Out-of-range Great Egrets showed up near Challis, ID 7 May (D&EF) and Missoula, MT 31 May (LW). A wayward Snowy Egret in Eureka, MT (AD) represented a local first record. Excellent numbers of White-faced Ibis were reported out of range, with one near Challis, ID 25 Apr (D&EF), 6 in Gallatin, MT 3 May (DF), 5 in Broadwater, MT 7 May (JP), and 11 near Missoula, MT 7-19 May (TT). A rare Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was an interesting find in Kootenai, ID 1 Apr (LH) and was perhaps the same bird that overwintered in nearby Bonner. The season's Eurasian Wigeon count was only 12, even fewer than last year's lackluster total. A male Tufted Duck near Cataldo, Kootenai, ID 9-27 Mar (LH) represented Idaho's 3rd record and was likely the same bird seen at this location last year. Scoters are unexpected in spring, so reports of a Surf in Bonner, ID 12 May (BB) and 5 White-wingeds at Flathead L., MT 15 Apr (BR) were especially noteworthy.

Although Broad-winged Hawks are increasingly reported in autumn, the group of 5 in Boise, ID 19 Apr (MC) represented the Region's largest single count ever. Both record early and out of range was the Swainson's



Hawk near Polebridge, MT 11 Apr (DO). A total of 3 Gyrfalcons was reported, more than usual in spring. Especially uncommon in spring was an American Golden-Plover near Kalispell, MT 9 May (GV). Single rare Snowy Plovers were great finds in Canyon, ID 30 Apr (BC) and at A.F.R. 7 May (CT). Black-necked Stilts continue to expand their breeding range: an incubating pair at L.M. 30 May (WT) represented a first local nesting. Sightings of up to 4 Upland Sandpipers in Valley 11-14 May (BC) provided hopeful news of Idaho's scarcest breeding bird. The only Short-billed Dowitcher reported was in Fremont, ID 12 May (CW). Wayward single Franklin's Gulls visited areas near Challis, ID 20 May (D&EF) and Cataldo, ID 31 May (LH). The season's rare-but-expected gull tally included 2 Thayer's, a Glaucous-winged, and 2 Glaucous Gulls, a typical springtime total. Three Arctic Terns at A.F.R. 13 May (CT) was an excellent showing, perhaps the Region's highest single count ever.

PIGEONS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

Reports of 5 Band-tailed Pigeons in Idaho 6-30 May surpassed even last year's unusually high total. Might we anticipate a Gem State nesting record soon? Eurasian Colared-Doves continued their slow but steady

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expansion into the Region, with 10 reported at new locations in Idaho and 4 in w. Montana. The Northern Hawk Owl present at Elkhorn, Blaine, ID (KC, PWP) since Dec was last reported 5 Mar. An ad. male Broad-billed Hummingbird banded in Caldwell, ID 15-20 May (CH, ph. SP) represented an exciting first record for the Region. An Anna's Hummingbird in Moscow, ID 4 Apr (B&RH) was the only report of this rare but increasingly reported visitor.

A Blue-headed Vireo was discovered at Camas 26 May (MCR); fewer than 10 previous Gem State records exist. Single rare Purple Martins visited Elmore, ID 24 Apr (HK) and Somers, MT 19 May (DC). Up to 4 Bewick's Wrens were in Canyon, ID 3-7 Mar (CSy), where they are now almost expected in spring. Five Northern Mockingbirds were reported in s. Idaho, an above-average tally. Both states posted out-of-range Sage Thrash-



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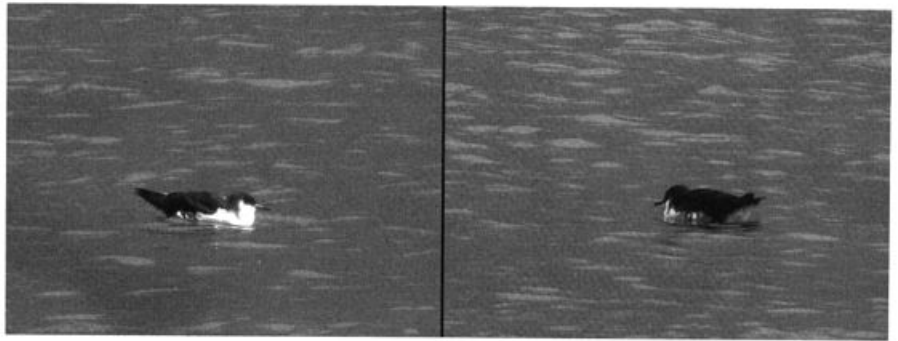
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This Manx Shearwater at Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge, Lake County, Montana 30 May 2004 was truly a "one-day wonder," found by Denver Holt and Brennan Mulrooney while leading a birding tour of the state. This bird furnished not only a first state record but only the second record for a land-locked U.S. state. Photographs by Brennan Mulrooney.

ers, with singles near Polebridge, MT 25 Apr (SG) and in *Bonner*, ID 9 May (BB). A Brown Thrasher at Camas 28 May (Mcr) was typical. The Siberian Accentor present in *Park*, MT was last reported 18 Mar.

The lineup of rare-but-expected warblers included a Tennessee Warbler at Camas 23 May (Mcr), a Northern Parula at Camas 26 May (CW), a Chestnut-sided Warbler near Helena, MT 31 May (DSu), up to 3 Black-and-white Warblers at Camas 9–29 May (Mcr, HK) and one at L.M. 20–21 May (JM), and an Ovenbird in *Jefferson*, ID 30 May (CW). Arriving a month early was a Northern Waterthrush near Bigfork, MT 13 Apr (RM). The total of 11 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks reported was high. An Eastern Towhee discovered at Camas 19 May (CW) furnished Idaho's 2nd record. A total of 5 Golden-crowned Sparrows came from Idaho, an excellent spring total. Up to 2 Rusty Blackbirds visited *Kootenai*, ID 25–29 Mar (MM); they are especially rare in spring. The

only reports of Idaho Great-tailed Grackles were singles in *Ada* and *Elmore*. A Hoary Redpoll present in *Blaine*, ID since Jan was last observed 9 Mar. Lesser Goldfinches continued to explore new territory in Idaho, with up to 20 in *Nez Perce* 1–27 Apr (JC) and one in *Cassia* 19 Apr (CC).

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This female Cape May Warbler below Fort Peck dam, Valley County, Montana, about the tenth for the state, was part of the large grounding of passerine migrants in the northern Great Plains on 24 May 2004 that included impressive numbers of Tennessee and Blackpoll Warblers. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore.